



Chapter 3

Existing Land Use and Management

3.1 Land Use and Management

3.1.1 Project Facilities and General Operations

Reclamation owns Black Canyon Reservoir, located in Gem County Idaho, and a significant portion of the land immediately adjacent to the reservoir. Black Canyon Dam is an irrigation diversion dam that impounds the Payette River and provides head for power generation with a capacity of 10,200 kilowatts (kW). Reclamation supervises dam and reservoir operations and is responsible for water supply diversion to contract users. There are four recreation areas along the reservoir, which are maintained and operated by Reclamation for public use. In addition, the Montour WMA is owned by Reclamation but managed under a cooperative agreement with IDFG for recreation and wildlife habitat. Reclamation does not currently have a managing partner for the four recreation areas along the reservoir, which are described in more detail in Section 3.3.

Reclamation's Black Canyon Reservoir property, including lands and waters, is approximately 3,900 acres. There are approximately 2,800 acres of Reclamation land adjacent to the reservoir and approximately 12 miles of shoreline. The reservoir has 1,100 surface acres and contains approximately 44,800 acre-feet of water. The reservoir is approximately

6 miles long, extending up into the Montour WMA.

Black Canyon Dam is a concrete gravity structure with a gated overflow spillway and has a structural height of 183 feet (see Photo 3-1). The dam diverts water through the Black Canyon Canal, located south of the dam, and supplies irrigation water as a component of the Payette Division of the Boise Project. To keep the canal full during the irrigation season, there are minimal reservoir level fluctuations. A second irrigation canal, the Emmett Irrigation District Canal, is located on the north side of the dam and is supplied water by two direct-connected turbine-driven pumps located in the powerhouse. Project specifications are summarized in Table 3.1-1.

In addition to providing water diversion for irrigation, the dam has a powerplant with two generators that are capable of generating a combined 10,200 kW. The powerplant is operated as a run-of-river plant, although operational releases are coordinated to maximize power generation. Because of this, the dam and reservoir do not have flood control capability. In 1997, the southern Idaho automation program was implemented that allows remote control of the southern Idaho powerplants (including Black Canyon, Anderson Ranch, Minidoka, and Palisades) from the Black Canyon control building. This has resulted in decreased operational expenses and increased operational efficiency for all plants.

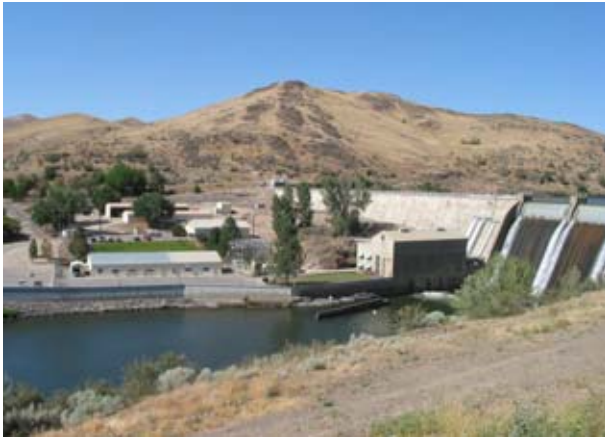


Photo 3-1. Black Canyon Dam, powerhouse, and operations facility.

The Black Canyon Powerplant shares a portion of the prorated remote operations costs. The plant supplies power to irrigation loads in the Boise, Owyhee, and Minidoka Projects as part of Reclamation's Southern Idaho Power System. Surplus power is delivered to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for marketing and distribution to regional industries and municipalities (<http://www.usbr.gov/power/data/sites/blackcan/blackcan.htm>).

Operations and maintenance of the five recreation areas at Black Canyon Reservoir costs approximately \$75,000 to \$100,000 annually, including both labor and materials. In 2001, an additional \$150,000 was spent rebuilding the docks at most of the recreation areas and at the three boat ramps along Highway 52. It is estimated that revenues currently generated by the five recreation areas associated with the

reservoir are approximately equal to the costs of operations and maintenance.

3.1.2 History & Overview

3.1.2.1 Land Status and Management

Agricultural activity in the Boise and Payette Valleys started in the early 1880s when settlers began filing on arid lands under private irrigation enterprises. By 1900, about 148,000 acres in the area had been placed under irrigation. Under provision of the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior authorized construction of the original Boise Project on March 27, 1905, and the construction of Black Canyon Dam on June 26, 1922. Black Canyon Dam was constructed for 2 years and became operational in 1924. The Boise Project currently furnishes irrigation water in southwestern Idaho and eastern Oregon to 225,000 acres of project lands and 165,000 acres of land under special and Warren Act contracts. There are 114,000 acres of irrigated land in the Payette Division that receive water from the Payette River and Black Canyon Reservoir, as well as surplus drainage from the Arrowrock Division. Storage reservoirs in the Payette Division include Deadwood Reservoir on Deadwood River and Cascade Reservoir on the North Fork of the Payette.

Table 3.1-1. Project specifications.

Normal Maximum Water Surface

Elevation	2497.5 feet
Storage	44,800 acre-feet
Surface Area	1,100 acres
Shoreline	12 miles

Black Canon Dam

Structural Height	183 feet
Crest Elevation	2,500 feet
Crest Length	1,040 feet
Spillway Capacity at Elevation 2497.5 feet	39,060 cubic feet per second
Outlet Works Capacity at Elevation 2497.5 feet	1,203 cubic feet per second
Powerplant Capacity	10,200 kW

Source: data provided by Reclamation

3.1.2.2 Withdrawn and Acquired Lands

Ownership of Reclamation's study area lands has been obtained over the years through different means. Land previously owned by the BLM adjacent to the reservoir shoreline has been "withdrawn." Specifically, withdrawn lands are those that have been removed from the public land rolls by Reclamation to be used for specified Reclamation projects. Additionally, some privately owned land adjacent to the reservoir has been "acquired" by Reclamation through purchase, donation, or exchange.

3.1.3 General Land Use Patterns

3.1.3.1 Ownership

Land ownership directly adjacent to Black Canyon Reservoir consists of a combination of public and private interests. Land status and management are mapped in Figure 3.1-1. The BLM and State of Idaho are the two public landowners in the vicinity of the reservoir. BLM owns land adjacent to the study area boundary on both the north and south sides of the reservoir. The largest contiguous BLM parcel is centrally located on the north side of the reservoir and comprises 1,186 acres. The second-largest BLM parcel, at 524 acres, is located on the south side of the reservoir, southwest of Montour WMA. Although there is no State of Idaho land immediately adjacent to the study area boundary, there is a 581-acre parcel and several smaller parcels within 1 mile of the study area boundary. The remainder of the land in the vicinity of the reservoir, both on the north and south sides of the reservoir, is privately owned. Privately owned parcels in this area are typically large in size and are used primarily for grazing and agricultural purposes.

A 3,232-acre planned unit development is being proposed on the south side of the reservoir. The phased development plan includes two 18-hole golf courses, a multipurpose equestrian center, home sites, public marina

and boat docks, clubhouse and facilities, trails, condominiums, and commercial development consisting of a post office, fire station, ambulance, and small retail shops.

Idaho Northern and Pacific Railroad, a subsidiary of Rio Grande Pacific Corporation, owns a 100-foot wide right-of-way containing train tracks on the south side of the reservoir. It bisects Reclamation lands, as well as privately owned lands. The railroad has been on the south side of the river since the late 1800s and was used for transporting timber and mineral resources out of the mountains as one of the former Union Pacific branch lines. The railroad is no longer used for this purpose. However, the Thunder Mountain Line, a company that currently provides scenic train rides between Horseshoe Bend and Cascade, started service in 2002 on a segment between Horseshoe Bend and Emmett with a stop at the Black Canyon Dam.

3.1.3.2 Land Classification

Most of the land north and south of Black Canyon Reservoir has been classified as "rangeland" using 1993 LANDSAT (satellite imagery) data for landcover. The remainder of land, concentrated in Emmett Valley to the west of the study area, Montour Valley to the east, and Sweet Valley to the northeast, is classified as "irrigated agriculture." There is a small amount of land adjacent to rivers and other waterbodies, such as the reservoir, that has been classified as "forested" or "non-forested wetland." The town of Emmett, approximately 4 miles southwest of the dam, is the only area in the vicinity of the study area classified as "dense urban." These geographic information system (GIS) data were obtained from Reclamation, which received the data from Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR).

3.1.3.3 Zoning

Black Canyon Reservoir and Reclamation lands within the study area boundary are lo-

cated within an area designated by the Emmett and Gem County Comprehensive Plan (Gem County 1995) Chapter 4 - Zoning Uses as either A1 Prime Agriculture or A3 Rural Agriculture. The transition from one zone use to another occurs at a line (Boise Meridian) running precisely north to south in the vicinity of Triangle Park. To the west of the Boise Meridian line, Reclamation and surrounding private lands are designated as A1 Prime Agriculture. The intent of the A1 Prime Agricultural zone is to keep lands free from urban development to protect them for agricultural or grazing purposes. There is a 40-acre minimum lot size. To the east of the Boise Meridian line, Reclamation and surrounding private lands are designated as A3 Rural Agriculture. There is a 5-acre minimum lot size specified in this zone designation.

Southeast of the Black Canyon Dam, in the Emmett Valley, a majority of the land is designated as A2 Rural Transitional Agriculture. The intent of this land use zone is to provide for more intensive urban development in unincorporated portions of Gem County while providing regulations to protect agricultural pursuits and guidelines for conversion to suburban development. There is a 5-acre minimum lot size in this zone use designation. None of the study area is located within land zoned as A2 Rural Transitional Agriculture.

The Emmett and Gem County Comprehensive Plan (Gem County 1995) designates the Payette River as a “working river” and recognizes agricultural, energy production, and recreation uses associated with the river. The Payette River has also been categorized as a “Hazardous Area” by the plan, as well as the Black Canyon Dam and Reservoir. Hazardous Areas pose safety threats and are either natural or manmade. High voltage electrical transmission facilities are considered a “Major Hazardous Area,” which is considered unsuitable for urban density type development and con-

centrated human presence without safeguards. Gem County may limit development in these areas (Gem County 1995).

In 1984, a management plan was developed for the Montour WMA (Reclamation 1984). The purpose of this plan was to evaluate current land, water, environmental, cultural, and recreational resource opportunities for this area. Due to sedimentation of the upper reservoir, the Montour Valley consistently flooded during spring rains and snowmelts. In 1976, the frequent flooding problem resulted in Reclamation acquiring all properties within the 100-year floodplain under the Montour Flood Project. In 1983, Reclamation entered into a cooperative agreement for management of the 1,100-acre WMA to protect and enhance wildlife habitats and to provide a variety of recreational experiences.

3.1.4 Easements, Leases, Other Agreements, Contracts, and Permits

3.1.4.1 Easements

In addition to managing U.S. lands, Reclamation uses or encumbers other privately owned properties along the reservoir through the mechanism of acquired flowage, access, or other easements (see Figure 3.1-1).

Flowage Easements

Five flowage easements totaling approximately 505 acres were obtained from four private landowners for land adjacent to the reservoir. The lands involved in flowage easements are still privately owned, although Reclamation has acquired rights over these lands whereby Reclamation is allowed to flood them as needed. Two flowage easements were obtained from the same private landowner and are located on the south shore of the reservoir across from Triangle Park. Only a narrow strip

Insert Figure 3.1-1.

Back of Figure 3.1-1.

of the Idaho Northern & Pacific Railroad right-of-way (ROW) separates these two flowage easements totaling 169 acres. A third small flowage easement (approximately 1 acre) is located south of these where two intermittent streams flow into the reservoir. The fourth and fifth flowage easements, each from a different private landowner, are located on the north side of the reservoir southeast of Squaw Creek. They are approximately 235 and 100 acres in size, respectively.

Access Easements

Reclamation has one access easement with a private landowner for a gauging station. The 1.8-acre easement is on the north side of the Payette River immediately west of Wild Rose Park and downstream of the dam. Land involved in the access easement is privately owned, although Reclamation has acquired rights over this land whereby Reclamation is allowed to use it for specific purposes.

Other Easements

Reclamation has an 1890 ROW easement that extends for approximately 2 miles and includes approximately 24 acres along the east side of the Black Canyon Canal. According to United States Code (USC) Title 43, Chapter 22, Section 945, “in all patents for lands taken up after August 30, 1890, under any of the land laws of the United States or on entries or claims validated by this Act, west of the one hundredth meridian, it shall be expressed that there is reserved from the lands in said patent described a right of way thereon for ditches or canals constructed by the authority of the United States” (Cornell Law School website). Reclamation exercised that reserved right on this segment of the Black Canyon Canal.

There are no known power line easements on Reclamation lands at Black Canyon Reservoir. However, large overhead power lines cross the reservoir east of Black Canyon Park that are owned by Idaho Power. No easement documentation related to these power lines exists.

It is likely that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the independent regulatory agency within the U.S. Department of Energy, used their jurisdictional authority to place them there because it is Federally owned land.

3.1.4.2 Leases

Agricultural and/or Grazing Leases

Reclamation also leases U.S. lands around the Black Canyon Reservoir for agricultural and grazing purposes. There are currently four grazing leases, two agricultural leases, and two agricultural/grazing leases (both uses may occur) totaling approximately 928 acres. These leases were established between 1999 and 2002 with the term of each lease ending the end of the calendar year the lease was established. However, the lessee has the option to extend the lease each year, but only for 4 more years after the original year of the lease. For example, leases signed in 2002 are valid through December 31, 2002; however, the lessee has the option to extend the lease each year, for a length of 1 year, through 2006.

Lands leased for grazing purposes only are located throughout the RMP study area. Land in the Little lease (Contract No. 2-07-11-L1769) is centrally located on the north side of the reservoir and is approximately 75 acres. Land in the McDonough lease (Contract No. 2-07-11-L1465) is located on the north side of the Payette River and Montour WMA at the east end of the RMP study area and is approximately 21 acres. Land in the Stanley lease (Contract No. 1-07-11-L1652) is located on the north side and western half of the reservoir in two separate parcels, one near Black Canyon Dam, the other between Black Canyon Park and Triangle Park, totaling approximately 283 acres. Land in the MacGregor lease (Contract No. 0-07-11-L1657) is located on several parcels along the south side and western half of the reservoir totaling approximately 227 acres. A fifth lease (McConnel, Contract No. 1-07-11-L1684), which was re-

newed in 2002, was for lands (approximately 308 acres) on the south side of the reservoir west of the Montour WMA. In total, Reclamation leases more than 600 acres of its land at Black Canyon Reservoir for grazing purposes. Grazing leases specify the cow-calf pairs of animal unit months (AUMs) allowed on each parcel leased (ranging from 10 AUM to 42 AUM) and the dates that grazing is permitted (typically April 1 through June 15 and September 1 through October 30). The land is not to be plowed or used for agricultural purposes without approval, access is permitted by U.S. employees or contractors associated with the operation of the Black Canyon Dam and Reservoir, and hunting and fishing by the public cannot be restricted by the lessee. Cattle and sheep have historically been trailed through the Montour WMA and Black Canyon Project lands.

Lands leased for agricultural purposes only are located in the Montour WMA. This is the Gatfield Farms lease (Contract No. 0-07-11-L1656), which is two parcels of approximately 68 acres. In total, Reclamation leases more than 84 acres of its land at Montour WMA for agricultural purposes only. The land is not to be used for grazing purposes without approval, access is permitted by U.S. employees or contractors associated with the operation of the Black Canyon Dam and Reservoir, and hunting and fishing by the public cannot be restricted by the lessee. Specifications in the Gatfield Farms lease, which is an agriculture/wildlife lease, detail the crop to be planted, the size of field for each crop to be planted, and a schedule for annual rotation of the crops. For example, while some fields can be planted at the discretion of the lessee (36 total acres), others fields are required to be planted with ear corn and annually rotated to provide food and cover for wildlife (32 total acres).

Lands leased for grazing/agricultural purposes (both may occur) are located in the Montour area. The first lease is the Hadley lease (Contract No. 0-07-11-L1529), which is several

parcels totaling approximately 230 acres. The second lease is the Keller lease (Contract No. 2-07-11-L1529), which is approximately 14 acres. In total, Reclamation leases more than 244 acres of its land at Black Canyon Reservoir for agricultural/grazing purposes. Specifications in these leases also detail the crop to be planted, the size of field for each crop to be planted, a schedule for annual rotation of the crops, the number of animals allowed to graze on each parcel, and the time of year they are permitted to graze. The Hadley lease allows 185 acres to be used for grazing (May 1 to September 30 only with no more than 175 AUMs permitted during this period) and 45 acres to be used for agriculture (22 acres as annually rotated corn for wildlife and 23 acres to be planted at the discretion of the lessee). No grazing is to occur in the agriculture parcel at any time. The Keller lease allows the lessee to plant alfalfa and/or small grains. If alfalfa is planted, the first cutting must occur after pheasant season nesting is completed, and 8 inches must be left standing for winter cover. If small grains are planted, 20 percent of the crop must be left standing for wildlife feed and cover.

3.1.4.3 Other Agreements, Contracts, and Permits

Fish and Wildlife

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Reclamation and IDFG was established in 1983 to provide for cooperation between the agencies in implementing the Montour WMA Management Plan (Reclamation 1983) and managing the Montour WMA. In general, Reclamation, with overall management responsibility, is responsible for completing upland and waterfowl habitat developments as specified in the plan while consulting with IDFG on all matters pertaining to fish and wildlife. IDFG is responsible for providing Reclamation with information and technical assistance during implementation of the fish and wildlife activities provided for in the plan, for enforcing all State of Idaho

fish and game laws, and for enforcing wildlife-related closures at Montour WMA. IDFG may also initiate and implement enhancement activities outlined in the plan with the approval of Reclamation.

In coordination with the IDFG, Reclamation has provided the letter of authorization, and the Department has issued the permit allowing dog trials to occur at the Montour WMA. These dog trials have taken place after the nesting season and have been consistent with WMA management goals and objectives.

Concessions

In the mid-1990s, a private concessionaire managed and maintained the five recreation areas for 1 year, but the contract was not renewed for a second year because the concessionaire could not make it financially viable. When management of the recreation areas was put out to bid the next year, a grounds maintenance contractor was contracted to maintain the parks and collect fees. This contract was not renewed at the end of the year. Since then, Reclamation has managed and maintained the recreation areas itself, as described in Section 3.3, *Recreation*. It is estimated that the revenue generated from user fees at Black Canyon Reservoir is generally not enough to maintain and operate the facilities and generate a profit. There are currently no contracts between Reclamation and any private concessionaire to provide recreation goods or services at any recreation area.

Noxious Weeds

A cooperative agreement exists between Reclamation and Gem County Weed Control to manage noxious weed species at Black Canyon Reservoir. Canada thistle and poison hemlock are the most significant noxious weed species found at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA. Other noxious weeds include yellowstar thistle, Russian knapweed, spotted knapweed, Scotch thistle, purple loosestrife, Eurasian watermilfoil, and perennial pepper-

weed (see Section 2.1.5, *Vegetation*). Reclamation pays Gem County Weed Control \$7,500 annually for noxious weed management. The Montour/Black Canyon Noxious Weed Control Plan (2002) prioritizes strategies based on the species of concern, the size of the population, and the likelihood of success in controlling the species. The strategies specify the location of the infestation, the herbicide to be used for treatment of each species, the application rate, the time of year to treat, and alternative herbicides for water-sensitive areas. Reclamation may require Gem County Weed Control to use, or refrain from using, certain herbicides in treatment of noxious weeds.

Recreation Facilities Maintenance

A Cooperative Agreement was established March 29, 1990 between Reclamation and the Gem County Waterways Commission (Contract No. 0-07-11-10713) to improve the maintenance and management of public recreation facilities, such as docks and boat launches, on the reservoir. According to the agreement, Reclamation has jurisdiction over and responsibility for managing recreation facilities at the reservoir, while the Waterways Commission has the capability to obtain grant funding for facilities as well as the expertise to maintain these facilities (Reclamation 1990). For example, in 1992 Reclamation requested 45 individual docks from the Waterways Commission to be delivered in the spring of 1993. Ownership of facilities, which have been funded through the Waterways Commission and given to Reclamation, is unclear but will be determined and documented. The roadside boat ramps are frequently referred to as “County Ramps,” and signs at these sites bear the logos of both agencies. Reclamation rebuilt docks adjacent to these ramps in 2001. Reclamation is responsible for maintaining these ramps, and Gem County is responsible for law enforcement, as well as assistance in placing docks at these and other locations around the reservoir.

Other

Western Idaho Powwow Association held a recreation permit issued by Reclamation in July 1995 that was terminated in April 2002. The recreation permit allowed them to host a 3-day powwow at Montour WMA each July. However, after several notices, the permit was terminated because of non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

The United States purchased the Palmer House when acquiring the townsite of Montour. Reclamation has an agreement with the current resident (as of January 2004) of the Palmer House wherein they are allowed to use the house as a residence. Once the house is vacated by that individual, this agreement will not be extended to any other party, and all personal belongings will be removed from the premises.

3.2 Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services

Most public facilities at Black Canyon Reservoir, such as day use areas, are owned by Reclamation. These facilities are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.3, Recreation. Utility infrastructure varies around the reservoir, ranging from limited facilities to more developed facilities that provide electricity and water, and have wastewater disposal. Police, fire, and emergency services are provided to the area by the Gem County Sheriff, Gem Fire Protection District 1, and Sweet Fire Protection District 2, as discussed below.

3.2.1 Electrical

Idaho Power provides electrical service in the area. Electrical power is available at most Reclamation recreation sites on the reservoir, supplying light for restroom facilities and power for well pumps as well as maintenance and recreation needs. Electrical power supplies lights located both inside and outside of the Wild Rose Park restroom and outside the

Black Canyon Park restroom. Electrical power supplies only security lights at Cobblestone Park, Triangle Park, and Montour Campground and is not available for public use at these areas. Public outlets are available for use at both the large and small gazebo at Wild Rose Park and the two gazebos at Black Canyon Park. Power at Montour Campground is only available to the campground host. Power is supplied by underground lines, not overhead poles, between the recreation areas along the reservoir, as well as throughout the Montour WMA. No roadway lighting exists within any of Reclamation's parks. No natural gas is available within the park.

3.2.2 Potable Water

Potable water is supplied to the dam and recreation areas at Black Canyon Reservoir by a series of separate wells. The water currently supplied by each of the wells does not receive chlorination treatment; however, the quality of the water is tested every 3 months (or as directed). Also, it is likely that Idaho State law will change requiring the water supply from these wells to be treated by chlorination in the near future. Water for public use is available at Cobblestone Park via a functioning and active well on site. A well near the dam supplies non-chlorinated water to dam facilities and Wild Rose Park. Non-chlorinated water for public use is also available at Black Canyon Park and Montour WMA, each supplied by its own well. No potable water is available at Triangle Park. Reclamation owns, operates, and manages the well pumps at each of these locations.

3.2.3 Wastewater

Wastewater is currently being collected and treated by either conventional on-site systems such as septic or by disposal units such as vault toilets. Toilets at the dam, Wild Rose Park, Black Canyon Park, and the recreation vehicle (RV) dump station at Montour WMA utilize septic systems. There are additional

toilets at Black Canyon Park, as well as toilets at Cobblestone Park, Triangle Park, and Montour WMA Campground that are vault toilets. There are no portable toilets used at any of the recreation areas at the reservoir.

There are flush toilets at the Black Canyon Dam facility and four flush toilets at the restroom at the adjacent Wild Rose Park. The wastewater from both the dam and park restrooms is pumped to a drain field south of the restrooms in the park. There has been no evidence of distress or overloading of this drain field. There is one restroom with a single vault toilet at Cobblestone Park. There is a flush toilet at the maintenance building at Black Canyon Park that is not available for public use. The wastewater from this toilet is gravity-fed to a septic field near the building, and no problems with the drain field have been reported. There is also a restroom with vault toilets for public use at Black Canyon Park. There are three separate restrooms at Triangle Park, each with a single vault toilet. One of the toilets is currently closed due to a crack in the vault. At Montour WMA Campground, there is a restroom with vault toilets.

Reclamation contracts with a local company out of Emmett to pump the vault toilets at all of the recreation areas at Black Canyon Reservoir. They are typically pumped twice a year – once during the summer season when they become full, and at the end of the summer season, usually in October, before seasonal closure.

Wastewater collected at the RV dump station at the Montour WMA Campground is pumped to a drain field across the road from the recreation area. No problems associated with this drain field have been reported. All restroom facilities are closed for the winter, with the exception of those at Wild Rose Park. These are left open as a rest stop for those traveling Highway 52 in the off season.

3.2.4 Solid Waste

Solid waste collection occurs at trashcans and dumpsters at recreation areas of the reservoir. Reclamation employees check trashcans located at all five recreation areas daily and, depending on use levels, empty them at least once a week into dumpsters. Reclamation contracts with a local company to collect solid waste from the dumpsters once a week. An average of 15-20 cubic yards of solid waste is collected on a weekly basis during the summer season. Solid waste is taken directly to Clay Peak Landfill in Payette County.

3.2.5 Fire Protection, Emergency Services, and Law Enforcement

When 911 is called for fire, medical, or law enforcement emergencies, Gem County dispatch, in Emmett, determines which entities should respond to the call and contacts the appropriate services by phone and/or radio. An ambulance in Emmett is dispatched to respond to emergency calls involving vehicle accidents, serious trauma, reports of chest pain, or drowning and water-related accidents. Gem Fire Protection District 1 (Fire District 1) and Sweet Fire Protection District 2 (District 2) are dispatched for fire response needs only, and the Gem County Sheriff is contacted for law enforcement needs and most other emergency response needs at Black Canyon Reservoir.

3.2.5.1 Fire Protection

Fire suppression at the reservoir has been provided by Gem County Fire District 1 and Gem County Fire District 2 and has typically been in response to boat, vehicle, trash, or grass fires. District 1 headquarters are based in Emmett and the district is located west of the reservoir in the Emmett Valley, its eastern boundary near the top of the dam. District 1 personnel include a volunteer chief and 22 volunteer firefighters. Equipment includes 9 trucks, including grass trucks, pumpers, and tankers with a total capacity of approximately

9,000 gallons. Response time to the dam, which is 7 miles from District 1 headquarters in Emmett, is approximately 10-15 minutes (pers. comm., Bill Lee, July 2002).

District 2 headquarters are based in Sweet, and the district is located northeast of the reservoir in the Sweet Valley, its southwestern boundary near Triangle Park. District 2 personnel include a volunteer chief and 17 volunteer firefighters. Ten additional volunteer firefighters are available through mutual aid agreements. District 2 maintains mutual aid agreements with BLM, State of Idaho, Gem County District 1, and Horseshoe Bend Fire District. Equipment includes several trucks, including 2 heavy brush rigs, 2 light brush rigs, a tender with 3,300 gallon capacity, and a pumper. The district received a new truck (750-gallon pumper) in 2002 that is foam-compatible (20-gallon tank) and can pump 1,000 gallons of water per minute (pers. comm., Bill Lee 2004). Response time to Triangle Park (the western extent of their jurisdiction), which is 7 miles from the District 2 headquarters in Sweet, is approximately 17-20 minutes. Response time to Montour WMA, which is 4 miles from Sweet, is approximately 12-15 minutes. For the last several years, District 2 has responded to 4-5 calls at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA each year. Response is primarily for wildfires with an occasional vehicle fire (pers. comm., Jim Buffington, September 2002).

Neither fire district has jurisdiction between the Black Canyon Dam and Triangle Park, although both Fire Districts 1 and 2 will respond to fires in this area, as well as any fires in proximity to the reservoir.

Both fire districts are volunteer operations with mutual aid agreements with the BLM. The agreements provide for mutual assistance between them to adequately respond to wildfire incidents. The nearest BLM personnel and equipment are located in Boise. The agreements provide for the nearest party to the agreement to respond upon request. In the

case of a wildfire incident, the Incident Command System (ICS) is utilized to facilitate a cooperative effort among agencies and applicable jurisdictions to suppress the wildfire (BLM 1997). The Mutual Fire Protection and Disaster Agreement is to be supplemented annually by an operating plan between the parties.

Reclamation and BLM – Idaho have a Wildland Fire Suppression Agreement which authorizes BLM to provide wildland fire suppression activities on certain withdrawn and acquired lands under Reclamation's jurisdiction in the region. Whether Reclamation Project lands at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour are included in this agreement is being clarified by Reclamation.

3.2.5.2 Emergency Services

Emergency calls from the reservoir are responded to by ambulance service stationed at the County Courthouse in Emmett. Individuals requiring emergency medical facilities are transported to Walter Knox Memorial Hospital in Emmett. Serious trauma victims are triaged at this location and then airlifted to St. Luke's or St. Alphonsus Hospital in Boise by Lifeflight-type helicopter transport. There are several near-drownings each year, with the most recent drowning death occurring in 2001 (pers. comm., Mary Anne Hanson, May 2004). Between the spring of 2001 and the spring of 2002, there were nine responses to emergency calls (including law enforcement and/or medical service) at Triangle Park, eight at Black Canyon Park, four at Wild Rose Park, one at Cobblestone Park, and none at Montour WMA. Response was for a variety of emergency events including trauma, chest pain, possible near drowning, traffic accidents, and domestic disputes. Response time from the Emmett Courthouse, which is the base for law enforcement as well as ambulance service, is 5 to 6 minutes to Black Canyon Dam and additional minutes to each of the successive parks along Highway 52.

3.2.5.3 Law Enforcement

Gem County Sheriff is the sole provider of law enforcement in the vicinity of the reservoir, at Black Canyon Reservoir recreation facilities, and on the reservoir. The Sheriff has a specific contract with Reclamation to provide law enforcement at recreation facilities between mid-May and mid-September. The contract provides for patrol of these recreation areas for 10 hours per week during the peak season. The contract for 2002 provides additional funds (approximately \$1,000) for equipment-related expenses. A wide range of disturbances at the reservoir's recreation areas requires Sheriff response. These disturbances typically include vandalism, theft, battery, domestic violence, discharging firearms, and alcohol-related misconduct. In the vicinity of the reservoir, Sheriff response is typically related to vehicle accidents. The response time from the Sheriff's headquarters in Emmett ranges from 5 to 15 minutes, depending whether the location is the dam or Montour WMA, respectively. Park hosts are present at some of the recreation areas during peak season operating hours. Hosts are unable to cite visitors for park violations but communicate with the Sheriff to minimize potential disturbances or to facilitate the handling of those that do occur (pers. comm., Don Wunder, 2002).

The Sheriff also provides marine patrol service on the reservoir from mid-May through mid-September. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) funds half of this service through their boat license fees, while Gem County funds the other half. One Sheriff's officer provides weekday patrol, while a second provides weekend patrol for a total of 60 hours a week during the peak season. The Sheriff operates out of Black Canyon Dam Park. Equipment utilized by the Sheriff's marine patrol consists of one jet boat and two PWC. They are pulled out of the reservoir each day and brought back to Sheriff's headquarters in Emmett. Activities of the Sheriff's marine patrol include boat inspections, emer-

gency response, righting capsized vessels, towing disabled vessels, removing hazards in the water, and enforcing laws.

Sedimentation of the upper reservoir has caused it to become shallow and difficult to navigate safely. Boat and PWC use is thus concentrated on the west end of the reservoir. Additionally, the reservoir is narrow and becomes quite crowded on weekends and holidays during the peak season. The actual level of boater conflict on the reservoir is characterized as low (pers. comm., Don Wunder, 2002), but the potential for future conflict continues to increase as the number of boats and PWC on the reservoir increase. Activities most popular on the reservoir include power boating, water-skiing, and PWC use. The most significant potential conflict exists between boats and the PWC that follow boats closely to jump their wake. There are no speed restrictions on the reservoir, but boat use must occur in a directional (clockwise) manner (pers. comm., Don Wunder, 2002).

3.3 Recreation

Black Canyon Reservoir is located in southwest Idaho, approximately 30 miles northwest of Boise near the town of Emmett in Gem County. Lands owned by Reclamation at Black Canyon Reservoir total approximately 3,900 acres, including approximately 1,100 reservoir surface acres and 12 miles of shoreline. Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA are located in the Payette River valley and offer a wide variety of recreational activities.

There are several other recreation providers in the region that offer flat-water oriented recreational opportunities as well as hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities, including: IDPR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), USFS, and IDFG. Several of the reservoirs located within the Black Canyon vicinity are comparable to Black Canyon Reservoir. However, because Black Canyon Res-

ervoir is operated for irrigation supply, its water level remains high, even in late summer. Most of the other reservoirs experience lower water levels and limited boat access during this time. Two comparable IDFG WMAs are near Black Canyon: Fort Boise and Payette River. Both are managed for waterfowl and upland game birds and are similar in size to Montour WMA (1,300 and 1,200 acres, respectively). In addition to comparable reservoirs and WMAs, there are several other recreation opportunities in the Black Canyon vicinity. The Payette and Boise National Forests offer many year-round recreation opportunities, and IDFG maintains ten Sportsman Access areas in the Black Canyon vicinity.

3.3.1 Recreation Facilities

3.3.1.1 Developed Recreation Facilities

Overview

Developed recreation facilities are provided by Reclamation in five locations around Black Canyon Reservoir: Black Canyon Park, Cobblestone Park, Montour WMA, Triangle Park, and Wild Rose Park. Public use at Black Canyon Reservoir is concentrated at these facilities; however, dispersed use occurs at numerous locations around the reservoir. As shown in Table 3.3-1, recreation facilities include picnic areas, a campground, courtesy docks, a swimming area, boat launches, restrooms, and various game courts (such as volleyball and horseshoes). No formal hiking or mountain biking trails are provided at Black Canyon Reservoir. Minor trails, particularly for angler shoreline access, exist within developed recreation facilities, but no continuous shoreline trail exists.

In general, the park season at each facility extends from the weekend before Memorial Day through the weekend following Labor Day. The campground at Montour WMA usually remains open a few weeks later than the other

facilities to accommodate hunters and anglers. The restrooms at Wild Rose Park are open year-round to accommodate travelers on Highway 52. The hours of operation for each facility are dawn to dusk, with the exception of the restrooms at Wild Rose Park, which remain open 24 hours a day.

Facilities

Black Canyon Park

Black Canyon Park is a 12-acre site approximately 0.5 mile upstream of Black Canyon Dam. The park is situated at the edge of and overlooking the reservoir on a gentle slope with large grassy areas and numerous shade trees (see Photo 3-2). Entrance to the site is controlled by an automated gate where a \$2 per vehicle day use fee is collected (2004 season). Currently, Black Canyon Park is the only day use facility at Black Canyon Reservoir with a day use fee. The gate can be opened with a code by visitors with season passes or reservations for one of the group picnic shelters.

A \$1 million renovation at Black Canyon Park was completed in 1993. Improvements included a new boat ramp and docks, roads and parking areas, two restroom buildings, two group picnic shelters, new picnic tables, a renovated irrigation system, landscaping, and lawn areas (see Photo 3-3). The site currently provides individual picnic tables, two group picnic shelters, an unsupervised swimming beach, internal asphalt trails, volleyball court, horseshoe pits, five tie-up docks, and a boat launch. The picnic sites are located along the asphalt walkway that roughly parallels the shoreline. The boat launch has a concrete ramp with two lanes as well as two tie-up docks. The five additional tie-up docks are adjacent to the swimming area. The group picnic shelters are available for rent for \$125/day (2004 season). Each shelter has electric power and can accommodate approxi-

Table 3.3-1. Facility locations and access at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA.

	Cobblestone Park	Wild Rose Park	Black Canyon Park	Triangle Park	Montour Campground	Montour WMA	County Boat Ramp #1	County Boat Ramp #2	County Boat Ramp #3
Acres	8.4	11.3	12.0	6.5	6.0	1,100			
Road Access (Paved/Gravel)	P	P	P	P	P	P	G	G	G
Interior Circulation(Paved/Gravel)	G	P	P	G	P	P/G	G	G	G
Car Parking Spaces (U=undefined)	50(U)	79	106	75(U)	35	5 areas (U)	U	U	U
Boat Trailer/Car Parking	NA	NA	37	U	NA	NA	U	U	U
Boat Ramps (lanes)	NA	NA	2	1	NA	NA	1	1	1
Courtesy Docks	NA	NA	11	4	NA	NA	1	1	1
Picnic Sites – Single Units	9	20	40	9	27 ^{/1/}	NA	NA	NA	NA
Group Picnic Shelters	NA	1	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Trails/Paths	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Volleyball Areas	no	no	2	1	1	no	no	no	no
Horseshoe Pits	no	no	1	1	1	no	no	no	no
Information/Interpretation Signage	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
Separate (buoyed) Swimming Area	0	0	1	0	NA	NA	0	0	0
Campsites - Single Units	NA	NA	NA	NA	17	NA	NA	NA	NA
Flush Restrooms	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vault Restrooms	1	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	0
Potable Water	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
Electrical Hookups	NA	NA	NA	NA	no	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dump Stations	NA	NA	NA	NA	yes	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maintenance/Storage Facilities	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no

Source: Reclamation and EDAW, 2002, 2003.

^{/1/} Picnic sites at Montour Campground include 17 sites associated with campsites and 10 other sites.



Photo 3-2. Panorama of Black Canyon Park.



Photo 3-3. One of the two group picnic shelters at Black Canyon Park.

mately 50 people. There are two restroom buildings at this site along with potable water. Each restroom building provides two toilets. There are 143 parking spaces, including eight accessible spaces, provided throughout the site in four separate areas.

An approximately 2,300 square foot maintenance and office building, constructed along with the park renovations in 1993, is located at the eastern edge of the park. The building is accessed via a gated maintenance road directly east of the park entrance. Currently, five employees work in the building. The building has six parking spaces, including one accessible space, and an enclosed maintenance yard.

Black Canyon Park is the only major location providing the combination of a park environment on the reservoir shore, swimming, and boating access to reservoir waters. As a result,



Photo 3-4. The Black Canyon Park beach/swimming area is one of the more popular locations (July 4th weekend, 2003).

Black Canyon Park receives the most intensive use and is most subject to crowding (see Photos 3-4 and 3-5). During peak periods, the parking lots fill by mid-day (see Photo 3-6) and either: (1) visitors begin parking along the highway and walking into the park (see Photo 3-7); or (2) boaters launch from, and end up parking at one of the ramps along Highway 52. These conditions raise highway safety concerns as well as illustrating capacity problems (see Photo 3-8).

Currently, the park is closed during the spring and fall; this limits use and may increase demand at other parks and facilities. Also, during the park's open season, some users have suggested that it is not open early enough in the morning or late enough in the evening to properly meet demand. Current hours at Black Canyon Park are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Cobblestone Park

Cobblestone Park is a 8.4-acre site downstream from Black Canyon Dam across the reservoir from Wild Rose Park. The park is accessed from a County Road with a manually operated gate. This site consists primarily of a large grassy area with shade trees, picnic tables, a gravel parking area, and an accessible single vault toilet and a storage shed (see Photo 3-9). Potable water is available at this site. During the summer season, a park host resides at the park providing oversight of the park and information to visitors. This site is primarily used as an angler access site for bank fishing.



Photo 3-5. Competition for picnic space was high at Black Canyon Park during the July 4th weekend, 2003.



Photo 3-6. Park staff having to close the gate and turn away vehicles during the 4th of July weekend at Black Canyon Park.



Photo 3-7. Cars lined up along Highway 52 adjacent to Black Canyon Park.

In 2001, renovations were completed that included a new grass area and installation of landscape irrigation. An accessible paved parking pad was installed at Cobblestone in 2002.

Adjacent to Cobblestone Park, a dirt road leads to a large, underutilized area along the Payette River. This area is State-owned and is used by anglers for bank fishing and could be the focus of additional facility and/or activity development (see Photo 3-10). However, this area is in the floodplain and is covered with water during rare and extreme spring flood events.

Another aspect of Cobblestone Park is its proximity to the Thunder Mountain Line railroad. The Thunder Mountain Line uses the railroad alignment/right-of-way that passes through the RMP study area, including the south shore area of the reservoir and the southern portion of Montour WMA. Cobble-

stone Park is currently a stopping and gathering point for the theme rides offered by the railroad.

Wild Rose Park

Wild Rose Park is a 11.3-acre site just downstream of Black Canyon Dam. The park is on the site of the construction camp used while Black Canyon Dam was being built. The park is situated at the edge of and overlooking the river on a gentle slope with large grassy areas and numerous shade trees (see Photo 3-11). There is also a large undeveloped area adjacent to the river that is popular for bank fishing.

Wild Rose Park was originally called Dam Park North; however, it was renamed Wild Rose Park in the spring of 1994 after a significant renovation. These renovations included new roads and parking areas, a new irrigation system, new picnic sites, internal paths, a restroom and associated septic system, a decorative stone wall, a gazebo, group picnic shelter, landscaping, and lawn areas. In addition, a new well was drilled for the use by the Black Canyon Dam facility and Wild Rose Park.



Photo 3-8. Cars fill up one of the Highway County boat ramp parking areas.



Photo 3-9. Cobblestone Park offers shady picnic sites.



Photo 3-10. Idaho Department of Lands property adjacent to Cobblestone Park is used primarily by river anglers.

Wild Rose Park currently provides individual picnic tables, a gazebo, and a group picnic shelter (see Photo 3-12). It has also traditionally served as a rest stop along the highway with travelers utilizing the restrooms and the “pet potty area.” The restrooms at Wild Rose Park are kept open year-round, primarily because of the park’s role as a rest stop for highway travelers. The group picnic shelter and gazebo are each available for rent for \$125 per day (2004 season). The shelter has electric power and can accommodate approximately 50 people. The gazebo is popular for weddings as it is located in a picturesque spot under mature shade trees overlooking the river. Wedding receptions, along with group picnics and family reunions, are often held in the group shelter. One restroom building at this site provides a total of four toilets. There are 79 parking spaces, including two accessible spaces.

Triangle Park

Triangle Park is a 6.5-acre site approximately 1 mile upstream of Black Canyon Dam (see Photo 3-13). This site is more rustic than the other facilities in both feel and in the type of amenities provided. The site has unique stone features built by the Youth Conservation Corps. The site provides individual picnic tables, a gravel parking area, vault toilets, a covered overlook, and a boat launch (see

Photo 3-14). Group camping is allowed at this site on a reservation basis only (pers. comm., Kathy Mondor, August 2002). The boat launch has a concrete ramp with one lane as well as two tie-up docks. There is no water or electricity at the park.

Generally, the park is underutilized, because (at least in part) it does not have paved parking, water, or electric power, and it is in an area of the reservoir that has been subject to high levels of sedimentation. Sediment build-up is a particular problem right off the boat ramp, limiting the type and number of boats that can use the ramp and causing problems with boats running aground.



Photo 3-11. Wild Rose Park and adjacent Payette River just downstream of Black Canyon Dam.



Photo 3-12. Group picnic shelter at Wild Rose Park.



Photo 3-13. View of Triangle Park, adjacent Black Canyon Reservoir, and surrounding landscape.

Montour WMA

Historically, the Montour WMA was the location of the small valley town of Montour. After the completion of Black Canyon Dam in 1924, sediment began filling the upper end of Black Canyon Reservoir, triggering a series of flood events in the river's floodplain, including Montour. After several attempts to mitigate the floods, Reclamation purchased the land within the 100-year floodplain in 1976 and designated the area as Montour WMA. IDFG and Reclamation entered into a cooperative agreement in 1983 to manage the 1,100-acre area to protect and enhance wildlife habitats and to provide a variety of recreation experiences. Montour WMA is a designated wildlife viewing site in the official Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guide (IDFG undated).

The Montour WMA Management Plan (Montour WMA Plan) was completed in 1984 to provide a guide for the orderly, coordinated development and management of the land and water resources of the Montour WMA for optimum public benefit (Reclamation 1984). The Montour WMA Plan called for three types of land use within the Montour WMA: recreation, wildlife enhancement, and agricultural production and pasture. To date, these are the only land uses within the Montour WMA, although only a portion of the development directives outlined in the Montour WMA Plan

have been implemented. One exception is the acquisition of a house remaining from the historic Montour town site, referred to as the Palmer House. The Montour WMA Plan laid out a phased conceptual plan for recreation development including a campground, picnic area, and bridle and interpretive trails.

Montour WMA consists of two somewhat distinct areas: a large complex of riparian vegetation, natural and constructed wetlands, and agricultural land managed for waterfowl and upland game bird habitat, and an area with a developed campground and many of the foundations from the historic Montour town site. The primary objectives of the Montour WMA were to provide habitat for waterfowl and upland game and to provide game bird hunting and other wildlife-related recreation opportunities (IDFG undated). Waterfowl habitat has been improved by the installation of nesting boxes and constructed wetlands. Upland game habitat is also provided by standing corn or other grains managed through farming and grazing lease agreements.

The Montour Campground is managed by Reclamation. It consists of 17 individual sites each with an asphalt parking spur, picnic table, and cooking grill (see Photo 3-15). The parking spurs can accommodate smaller RVs or trailers; however, RV hook-ups are not currently provided. Utilities include a restroom



Photo 3-14. Grassy picnic area and restroom facility at Triangle Park.

with vault toilets, water faucets throughout the site, and an RV dump station. Non-chlorinated water for public use is provided from an on-site well. Three large fire pits are available at the campground.

Activities outside the campground at Montour WMA include fishing, hunting, hiking, and wildlife observation. Waterfowl and upland game bird hunting are the most popular activities at Montour WMA, followed by fishing, wildlife observation and hiking, and big game hunting (pers. comm., Tim Shelton, IDFG, September 2002). Within Montour WMA, there are several unofficial trails. Designated interpretive and bridle trails proposed in the 1984 Montour WMA Plan were not implemented. Unofficial trails are located predominantly along the Payette River and around Twin Ponds and are most likely used by anglers and hunters. The gravel roads in Montour WMA are also used by hikers and equestrians as an unofficial trail system. In addition, an area within the WMA adjacent to the bridge over the Payette River is used as a put-in site by kayaks and canoeists.

Recreation impacts on vegetation and wildlife resources are a concern at Montour WMA. IDFG specifically closes key nesting areas to all recreational use each year during nesting season, from February 1 to July 1. The closures are identified via signage and through coordination with user groups. However, enforcement of the closures is difficult and violations are a major problem. Intrusion into nesting areas during the nesting season is one of the most significant concerns, whether as a result of activities of human users or inadequate control of domestic animals. Specific to domestic animals, dog trials that occur at Montour WMA are an allowed use. IDFG has guidelines for proper dog handling in sensitive habitat areas and works with organized groups to manage where the trials are conducted during sensitive times of year; however, casual users present a bigger management challenge (pers. comm., Tim Shelton, September 2002).



Photo 3-15. Campsite at Montour Campground.

Conflicts and safety concerns are emerging in the Montour WMA between both hunting and general wildlife observation interests, and different types of hunters. Vehicle circulation and parking problems are a related concern. At present, hunters and other users simply park along the roads or at self-selected gathering points. No controls are in place to manage circulation or parking (pers. comm., Tim Shelton, September 2002).

3.3.2 Undeveloped Recreation Sites

Seven dirt or gravel turnouts are located along Highway 52, all of which are located between the road and the north shore of the reservoir. These turnouts provide view access, access to the reservoir, and boat trailer parking. Boat ramps and small docks are located at three of these turnouts (see Photo 3-16). One of these is west of Black Canyon Park (designated as Ramp #1) and two are to the east (designated as Ramps #2 and #3). Ramp #2 is just west of Triangle Park, and Ramp #3 is approximately 1 mile east of that park. Each of these ramps is accessed via a small turnout area along the highway, and each features a small dock for loading and unloading boats.

Ramp #1 is the most heavily used by boaters, especially when Black Canyon Park is either closed or full. This ramp is also used by boaters who do not wish to pay the fee at Black



Photo 3-16. Highway County Boat Ramp #1.

Canyon Park or who simply want a less formal place to stage their boating activities. The other ramps are less busy, but are popular with personal watercraft (PWC) users because of their location adjacent to the reservoir (i.e., where sedimentation is an issue of concern to power boaters).

Use of these ramps can cause both highway safety and general traffic circulation problems. As noted above, the ramps are served only by small, unmarked turnouts along the highway.

When these sites are busy, the turnouts fill rapidly with parked vehicles and trailers, and users begin to park along the highway after launching their boats. This occurs predominantly at Ramp #1 because it is a focus for overflow when Black Canyon Park is full, but drop-off and parking safety can also be a concern at Ramp #2.

3.3.3 Visitor Origin and Activities

In 2002, park staff at Black Canyon Park conducted instantaneous counts of vehicles and park visitors on 11 different days during August and September. Because of limited resources, Black Canyon Park was the only facility at which instantaneous counts were conducted. Although limited in scope, these counts provide useful information regarding visitor origin and the types of activities in which visitors participate. Given that Black Canyon Park is the busiest of the five facilities

at the reservoir, these results may be representative of the visitor origin at the other facilities. Since each facility provides different recreation opportunities and experience levels, the types of activities participated in at each site likely vary somewhat from those at Black Canyon Park.

Visitor origin was determined by noting the county of origin on license plates during the instantaneous counts of vehicles and vehicles with trailers. As shown in Table 3.3-2, nearly half of all visitors to Black Canyon Park were from Ada County. This figure suggests that the park serves as a popular recreation destination for residents of the Boise metropolitan area. Most of the remainder of visitors were from Gem County and the adjacent counties of Canyon and Payette. In addition, a number of visitors were from the state of Oregon which is approximately 30 miles west of Black Canyon Reservoir and easily accessed by Highway 52 and I-84.

Instantaneous counts were also taken of visitors while they were participating in different recreation activities. Table 3.3-3 shows all of the types of recreation activities visitors participated in while visiting Black Canyon Park.

Table 3.3-2. Origin of visitors to Black Canyon Park.

Idaho Counties	Percent
Ada County	46 %
Canyon County	19 %
Gem County	11 %
Payette County	10 %
Washington County	2 %
Boise County	2 %
Other ¹	3 %
Other States	
Oregon	5 %
Other ²	2 %
Total	100 %

¹Other counties include Bannock, Owyhee, Elmore, Owyhee, Valley, and Nez Perce.

²Other states include California, Utah, and Washington.

Source: Compiled by Reclamation, EDAW, Inc. 2002

Table 3.3-3. Activities participated in at Black Canyon Park.

Activity	Percent participating
Picnicking	48
Power boating/Water-skiing ¹	29
Swimming/Sunbathing	13
Volleyball	4
PWC use	3
Bank fishing	1
Boat fishing	1
Other ²	1
Total	100

¹Power boating/water-skiing percentage based on counts of individual boats and an assumption of 5 people per boat.

²Other activities include bird watching, horseshoes, canoeing/kayaking, windsurfing, and sailing.

Source: Compiled by Reclamation, EDAW, Inc., 2002

The most common activity at Black Canyon Park appears to be picnicking. As noted in Table 3.3-3, other popular activities include power boating/water-skiing and swimming/sunbathing. While nearly half of the park visitors participated in picnicking, this wide range of activities indicates that the park provides numerous outdoor recreation opportunities.

3.3.4 Current Recreation Activities

3.3.4.1 Water-Based Activities

Water-based recreation activities in the RMP study area include fishing, boating, water-skiing, PWC use, and swimming.

Fishing is a popular activity throughout the Black Canyon study area. The primary fish species sought by anglers at Black Canyon Reservoir are smallmouth bass, rainbow trout, crappie, white fish, bullhead and channel catfish, while the primary fish species found

within Montour WMA are largemouth bass and rainbow trout (see Section 2.1.7, *Aquatic Biology*). Both bank fishing and fishing from a boat occur at Black Canyon. IDFG is responsible for issuing permits and regulating fishing activities at Black Canyon, as well as ensuring compliance with IDFG regulations.

Motorized boats are the principal means to access Black Canyon Reservoir. Motorboats support activities such as water-skiing, fishing, and power boating (see Photos 3-17 and 3-18). Currently, there are no limitations on the number of motorized boats allowed on the reservoir, and there are no posted speed limitations; however, motorized boats must operate in a clockwise direction. Black Canyon has also experienced an increase in the use of PWC. User conflicts can occur when PWC users disrupt fishing activities and cause safety concerns when they jump boat wakes or pass too close to other boaters.



Photo 3-17. Water-skiing and wake-boarding are very popular activities on Black Canyon Reservoir.

Swimming is also a popular activity at the reservoir although there is only one designated swimming area, at Black Canyon Park. None of the recreation areas offer any lifeguard services to facilitate this activity.

3.3.4.2 Land-Based Activities

Land-based recreation activities in the RMP study area include camping, picnicking, hunting, wildlife observation, and informal hiking and unauthorized off-road vehicle (ORV) use (see Photo 3-19).

Currently, camping occurs primarily in the only developed campground in the RMP study area, Montour Campground (see Photo 3-20). Camping is limited to no more than 14 days

within any 30-day period. Limited group camping occurs at Triangle Park. Camping at Triangle Park is limited to no more than one night and is by reservation only. Dispersed camping is also becoming a concern around Black Canyon Reservoir. Areas most often used at present include Squaw Creek and highway Ramp #3. However, none of these areas are currently posted as no camping zones. Picnicking occurs at all 4 of the developed recreation facilities at both individual picnic sites and group picnic shelters.

Hunting occurs mainly in the Montour WMA (see Photo 3-21). Primary species sought by hunters include upland birds such as pheasants, gray partridge, and California quail, as well as a variety of waterfowl. Natural pheasant populations are supplemented with the release of game farm pheasants as part of the IDFG Pheasant Stocking Program. To hunt pheasants at Montour WMA, hunters must purchase a WMA permit from IDFG in addition to other required license, tag, and permit fees. In general, pheasants are released twice a week throughout the hunting season. In 2001, 764 hunters purchased WMA permits for Montour WMA. That same year, 1,180 pheasants were released at Montour WMA with a harvest of 1,021 (IDFG 2002). This figure represents an 87 percent harvest ratio. In comparison, Fort Boise WMA and Payette River WMA had 83 percent and 58 percent harvest



Photo 3-18. One of several day use docks on the reservoir.



Photo 3-19. Picnicking and swimming at Black Canyon Park.



Photo 3-20. Camping at Montour Campground.

rates, respectively (IDFG 2002). Bird hunting is permitted over the entire area, with the exception of a safety zone established around the campground and historic Montour town site. IDFG is responsible for issuing permits and regulating hunting activities at Montour WMA, as well as ensuring compliance with IDFG regulations throughout the RMP study area. In addition to hunting, random shooting and target practice occur in the RMP study area as a whole.

Montour WMA offers the opportunity to view a wide range of migratory and resident birds. Montour WMA is a designated wildlife viewing site in the official Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guide.

Hiking and other trail use are limited as there are few trails within or near recreation areas at Black Canyon Reservoir. Hikers have forged a few “unofficial” trails adjacent to the parks and several within the WMA, but there are no official trail routes within the RMP study area.

All Reclamation lands, agency-wide, are formally closed to ORV use unless specifically opened as per 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 420. At Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA, all lands are closed; however, unauthorized ORV use frequently occurs at Montour WMA.



Photo 3-21. Montour WMA offers good hunting opportunities.

3.3.4.3 Special Events

Specific areas of Black Canyon Reservoir are available for group use for events such as reunions, weddings, and large picnics. Five areas are available for reservation: the gazebo and picnic shelter at Wild Rose Park, two picnic shelters at Black Canyon Park, an area of Triangle Park for group camping, and the Montour WMA near the historic town site. Use of these areas requires a reservation made through park staff and payment of a \$125/day rental fee for each facility (2004 season).

Large, annual events are also held at Black Canyon Reservoir. In 2002, for example, the Boise Aeros Multisport Club used Black Canyon Park for the Emmett Triathlon. In addition, Reclamation, along with several other agencies, sponsors an annual event called Catch a Special Thrill. This event, held at Black Canyon Park, involves taking children with disabilities and terminal illnesses out in boats to go fishing.

In general, large special events require a Special Use Permit that has to be reviewed and approved by Reclamation’s Area Manager. Special events also require payment of an administrative fee and the rental fee of any facilities required for the event (e.g., a group picnic shelter). The cost of the permit varies depending on the number of people participat-

ing in the event and the number of facilities required for the event.

3.3.5 Recreation Management

Overall management and maintenance of recreation at Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA are carried out by Reclamation, with assistance from Gem County and IDFG. Except for a short time in the mid-1990s, Reclamation has been the primary agency responsible for managing and maintaining all of the recreation areas at Black Canyon and Montour WMA. Currently, Reclamation employs a full-time Recreation Maintenance Worker along with five summer seasonal maintenance workers to maintain the five recreation areas.

After attempts with two concessionaires, it was found that the revenue generated from user fees at Black Canyon Reservoir was not enough to maintain and operate the facilities while generating a profit. There are currently no contracts between Reclamation and any private concessionaire to provide recreation goods or services at the park.

Each year, the Gem County Sheriff's Department has a specific contract with Reclamation to provide law enforcement services in addition to normal services at Reclamation's lands and recreation areas located at the reservoir and Montour WMA. These contracts provide for patrol of recreation areas during the summer season, as well as funds for equipment. Additionally, the Sheriff provides marine patrol service on the reservoir from mid-May to mid-September (Reclamation 2002). The Sheriff is the sole provider of law enforcement on the reservoir and operates out of Black Canyon Park. Also see Section 3.1.4.3, *Law Enforcement* subsection.

A Cooperative Agreement between Reclamation and the Gem County Waterways Commission provides for the maintenance and management of public recreation facilities, such as docks, boat launches, and swimming, fishing, and picnicking areas on the reservoir.

According to the agreement, Reclamation has jurisdiction over and responsibility for managing recreation facilities at the reservoir, while the Waterways Commission has the capability to obtain grant funding for facilities as well as the expertise to maintain these facilities (Reclamation 1990). This agreement extends to the roadside boat ramps, which are frequently referred to as "County Ramps." Also see Section 3.1.4.3, *Agreements* subsection.

An MOU between Reclamation and IDFG provides for cooperation between the agencies in managing Montour WMA (Reclamation 1983). Reclamation has issued letters allowing dog trials to occur at Montour WMA, although no permits have been issued. See Section 3.1.4.3, *Agreements* subsection, for a description of the MOU.

3.4 Transportation & Access

The majority of visitors to Black Canyon Reservoir facilities reside in the nearby communities of Gem County or surrounding counties such as Ada, Canyon, and Payette. Primary vehicular access to the reservoir is by way of State Highway 52, which runs primarily east to west along the north shore of the reservoir. Ola Valley Highway feeds into Highway 52 from the north. To the east, Highway 52 ends at Highway 55 which runs north to south between McCall and Boise. To the west, Highway 52 runs through the town of Emmett and then northwest through the Payette River valley. No air, rail, bus, or shuttle services are provided to the reservoir or within Reclamation lands. However, train tracks on the southern side of the reservoir currently owned by Idaho Northern and Pacific Railroad are part of the Thunder Mountain Line scenic rail tour.

3.4.1 Major Arterials

Highway 52 is the only major arterial that serves as vehicular access directly to and along the reservoir. The highway runs on the

north side of the reservoir, connecting Reclamation's five recreation areas. Three of the recreation areas (Wild Rose Park, Black Canyon Park, and Triangle Park) have entrances directly off of Highway 52. The other two (Montour WMA and Cobblestone Park) can each be accessed from separate spur roads off of Highway 52. Highway 52 runs east to west for approximately 5 miles within Reclamation land along the reservoir. Highway 52 leaves Reclamation land and the shoreline west of Squaw Creek and runs east another 2 miles to its junction with Old Montour Road. Continuing from this junction, Highway 52 continues east away from the shoreline and north of Reclamation lands for another 2.5 miles toward Horseshoe Bend. The total length of Highway 52 as it runs through Reclamation lands and adjacent to them is approximately 10 miles. The highway has no traffic lights and no stop signs along this stretch. This major arterial is a 2-way, 2-lane road. It has a paved asphalt surface with 11- to 18-foot wide lanes and 2- to 7-foot wide gravel shoulders. The speed limit is generally posted as 55 mph, although there are several locations where it is reduced to recommended speeds of 50, 45, or 35 mph due to tight curves, especially in the vicinity of Triangle Park (pers. comm., Gail Newlun 2002).

There are seven dirt or gravel turnouts located along Highway 52, all between the road and the reservoir. These turnouts provide view access, access to the reservoir via three separate boat launches, and boat trailer parking. During high use on peak season weekends and holidays, use of these highway turnouts becomes serious safety hazards. When accessing boat ramps at these turnouts during peak-use times, drivers must frequently turn around, stop, and/or back up on the highway to maneuver among the vehicles and trailers haphazardly parked in these turnouts. This stretch of Highway 52 is used not only by visitors to the reservoir but also by residential traffic, utility vehicles, and logging trucks. The road gets peak usage on weekends and holidays

during summer months. Data collected by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) in 2000 indicate that the Average Daily Trip (ADT) count for vehicles on Highway 52 decreases from west to east in the vicinity of the RMP study area. The ADT count equaled 1,800 between Idaho Boulevard and the dam (3 miles), 1,600 between the dam and the Old Montour Road turnoff (7 miles), and 1,100 between the Old Montour Road turnoff and Highway 55 at Horseshoe Bend (9 miles) (ITD 2000).

Highway 52 is owned and maintained by ITD. A maintenance crew of two is based out of the Emmett Maintenance Shed from which two plows and other heavy equipment (backhoe, loader, grader) are dispatched. The highway is plowed during winter storms that produce significant accumulations, of which there are three to four each winter. Additionally, ITD sands the highway during winter storms. There are no significant maintenance issues associated with the highway. However, the highway receives a significant amount of logging truck traffic, especially since mills north of the reservoir have closed and logs are now being transported via Highway 52 to mills in the state of Oregon (pers. comm., Dennis Moffat, 2002).

Gem County Sheriff responded to 29 motor vehicle accidents on Highway 52 between mile marker 37 (Plaza Road) and mile marker 44 (east of Old Montour Road) from January 1996 through June 2002. Table 3.4-1 shows that the number of accidents along this section of highway has either remained constant or increased each year since 1997.

3.4.2 Local Roads

In addition to Highway 52, there are a few additional roads that exist within or adjacent to Reclamation lands at Black Canyon Reservoir. Wild Rose Park and Black Canyon Park are located along Highway 52 and are accessed by paved roads off of the highway to parking and

Table 3.4-1. Motor vehicle accidents in the vicinity of Black Canyon Reservoir.

Year	Number of Motor Vehicle Accidents
1996	4
1997	2
1998	2
1999	4
2000	4
2001	5
2002	8
(January – June)	

Source: Provided by Gem County Sheriff's Department

other facilities within the park. The paved access roads are typically two lanes wide and have gravel shoulders.

Triangle Park is accessed by a two-lane dirt/gravel road off of Highway 52. These access roads to and within the parks are owned and maintained by Reclamation.

The Montour WMA is east of the reservoir, one mile south of Highway 52 on Old Montour Road. A series of gravel roads are located within the WMA, remnants of the street grid of the old town of Montour. These roads now provide access for recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping as well as maintenance and management activities within the WMA. These roads also provide access for the occupant of the one remaining residence within the WMA. Roads in the WMA are gravel and typically 32 feet wide. There are no stoplights or stop signs within the WMA. Roads within the WMA are owned by Gem County and maintained by the Gem County Road and Bridge Department (pers. comm., Francie Basset 2002). There are no significant maintenance or operation issues associated with this road except that there is infrequent flooding that periodically covers roads within Montour WMA (pers. comm., Dennis Pulley 2002).

Cobblestone Park, directly across the river from Wild Rose Park, can be accessed from Highway 52 using Old Dam Road located west of the reservoir and downstream of the dam. Old Dam Road is gravel and is owned and maintained by Gem County. This road is

typically 32 feet wide and has shoulders except where it runs along the hillside (pers. comm., Francie Basset 2002). There are no significant maintenance or operation issues associated with this road. County gravel roads in the study area are typically regraded every 10 days to 2 weeks and are plowed as needed in the winter (pers. comm., Dennis Pulley 2002).

3.4.3 Parking

Reclamation has designated parking areas at four of the five recreation areas associated with Black Canyon Reservoir. The campground at Montour WMA does not have a designated parking area but has individual parking spots at each site. There are 143 paved parking spots at Black Canyon Park, 79 paved parking spots at Wild Rose Park, approximately 75 gravel parking spots at Triangle Park, and approximately 50 gravel parking spots at upper Cobblestone Park. Parking off of the pavement at Black Canyon and Wild Rose parks is prohibited and results in towing of the vehicle. Towing signs are posted at these recreation areas. A considerable amount of parking occurs along Highway 52 when lots become full at these recreation areas during busy summer weekends.

3.4.4 Trails

There are few trails within or near recreation areas at Black Canyon Reservoir, with the exception of the Montour WMA. Hikers have forged a few “unofficial” trails adjacent to the parks, but there are no official trail routes outside the parks. Trail use is generally limited to people accessing the parks and shorelines from Highway 52. Within Montour WMA, there are several unofficial trails. Designated trails proposed in the 1984 Master Plan for Montour were never implemented. Unofficial trails are located predominantly along the Payette River and around Twin Ponds and are most likely used by anglers and hunters. The gravel roads in Montour are also used by hik-

ers and equestrians as an unofficial trail system.

3.4.5 Lake/Boat Access

Access to the reservoir or river for activities such as boating, picnicking, and fishing is provided in several areas. Day users and those fishing the Payette River below the dam can access the water at Wild Rose Park and Cobblestone Park. There are no boat ramps at either of these sites, but access by foot is only a short distance from parking areas. Black Canyon Park has a boat launch with two concrete ramps and two docks. Triangle Park has a one-ramp concrete boat launch. In addition to the launches at these two parks, there are three concrete ramps off of Highway 52. Section 3.1, *Land Use and Management*, summarizes the Cooperative Agreement that exists between Reclamation and the Gem County Waterways Commission with regard to maintenance and management of these facilities. There are several other undeveloped dirt and gravel access points that are used to launch boats along the north shore.

3.4.6 Disability Access

All parks at the reservoir will comply with Department of Interior Accessibility Standards by 2010. A paved pad was installed in the gravel parking lot at Cobblestone and is scheduled for completion in 2008 to make this site accessible.